

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method of cleaning and preparing produce, the method comprising:
2 transporting the produce on a conveyor;
3 rotating the produce substantially continuously during the transporting;
4 and
5 applying steam to an outer surface of the produce on the conveyor.
- 1 2. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the steam is applied at a
2 pressure in a range of 20-100.
- 1 3. A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising washing the
2 produce on the conveyor.
- 1 4. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein the washing is done
2 prior to applying steam.
- 1 5. A method in accordance with claim 4 wherein the steam is applied at a
2 pressure in a range of 20-90 psi.
- 1 6. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein the washing is done
2 after applying steam.
- 1 7. A method in accordance with claim 6 wherein the steam is applied at a
2 pressure in a range of 20-100 psi.
- 1 8. A system for cleaning and preparing produce, the system comprising:
2 a housing comprising an entrance and an exit;
3 a rotating conveyor extending from at least the entrance to the exit; and
4 a steam pasteurization section within the housing, the steam
5 pasteurization station comprising a plurality of steam jets arranged around the rotating
6 conveyor, wherein some of the steam jets are arranged off-center with respect to the rotating
7 conveyor.
- 1 9. A system in accordance with claim 8 further comprising a wash station
2 with the housing.

1 10. A system in accordance with claim 9 wherein the wash station is
2 located prior to the pasteurization station.

1 11. A system in accordance with claim 10 wherein the wash station is
2 located after the pasteurization station.

1 12. A system in accordance with claim 8 wherein the rotating conveyor
2 comprises a series of transverse rollers coupled at their ends to a pair of roller chains, and a
3 rack and pinion drive coupled to the rollers.

1 13. A system in accordance with claim 8 further comprising lane dividers
2 extending longitudinally along the rotating conveyor a direction of travel of the conveyor.